

not fructify at once, but falls into rivers and into the sea, to be swallowed up by fishes and sea-monsters. Then, only after these have been dissolved in the sea, and after the sea water has been attracted by clouds, the rain falls down again, it may be on desert or stony land.

Here it may be swallowed by snakes or deer and these may be swallowed up by other animals, so that the round existence seems endless-

Nor is this all. *Some* rain may dry up or be absorbed by bodies that cannot be eaten. Then if the rain is absorbed by rice, corn, etc.

and this be eaten, it may be eaten by children or by men who have renounced marriage and thus again lose the chance of a new birth.

Lastly, there is the danger arising from the nature of the being in whom the food, such as rice and corn, becomes a new seed, and likewise from the nature of the mother. All these chances have to be met before a new birth as a Brahmana, Kshatriya, or Vaisya can be secured.

Another curious distinction is here made by Sankara in his commentary. There are some, he says, who assume the form of rice, corn, etc., not in their descent from a higher world as described in the Upanishad, but as a definite punishment for certain evil deeds they have committed. These remain in that state till the results of their evil deeds are over and assume then a new body, according to their work, like caterpillars. With them there is also a consciousness of these states and the acts which caused them to assume this or that body,

leave impressions behind, like dreams.
 This is not the case with those
 who in their descent from the moon, pass,
 as we saw, through an exist-
 ence as rice, corn, *etc.* They have no
 consciousness of such existence,
 at least not in their descent. In their
 ascent to the moon, they have
 consciousness, as a man who climbs up a
 tree knows what he is about.
 But in their descent, that consciousness is
 gone, as it is when a man falls
 down from, a tree. Otherwise, a man, who
 by his good works had
 deserved rewards in the moon, would,
 while corn is being ground,
 suffers torture¹?, as if he were in hell, and
 the very object of good works
 as taught by the Veda, would be defeated.
 As we see that a man struck
 by a hammer can be carried away
 unconscious, so it is in the descent
 of souls, till they are born again as men
 and gain a new start for the
 attainment of the Highest Brahman ".

Sections xi to xviii give a conversation between
 Asva-
 pati, a royal sage, and Uddalaka Aruni and five other
 Brah-
 manas. He expounds to them the doctrine of
 Vaisvanara ^
 the world as a Person. Each of these six scholars had his
 own conception of the Highest. The first on being asked
 whom he considered said it was Divam the Self; the
 second